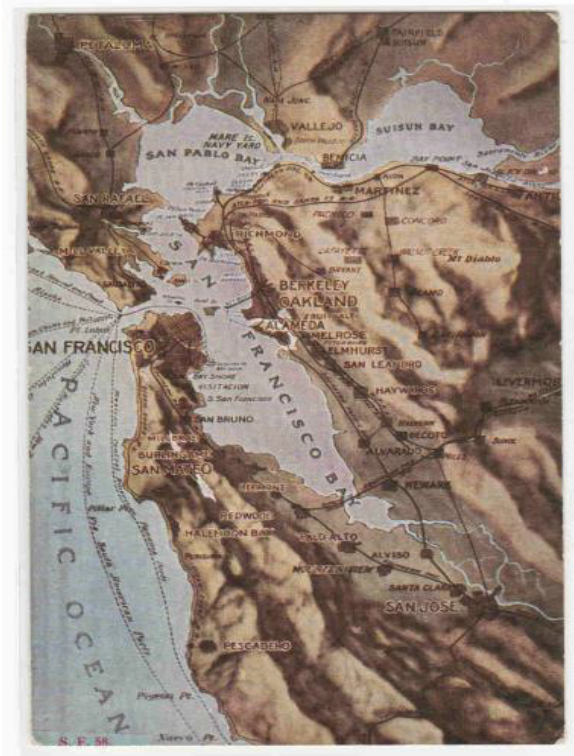


## Did You Know....?

By Clem Dougherty



San Francisco Bay

...that the entrance to San Francisco Bay (now the Golden Gate) was discovered from the Oakland side of the Bay and not from the San Francisco side? Yes, it's true. In our last newsletter, we left the Sacred Expedition commanded by Don Gaspar de Portola on the top of the coastal mountain range above present day San Bruno looking upon San Francisco Bay for the first time. In that last newsletter, we discussed how San Francisco Bay was accidentally discovered by land and not by sea on November 1, 1769.

Historians long believed that Sergeant Jose Ortega, upon being sent by Portola to the top of the ridge on November 1, 1769, also traveled up the San Francisco peninsula to the present day Golden Gate so as to become the first European to discover the entrance to the Bay.

Apparently, this is not the case. Historians now believe that it was not until 1770, approximately 1 year later, that **Pedro Fages**, the second Spanish governor of California, and his party scouting along the shore on the East Bay side, became the first Spanish explorers to see the narrow gap constituting the entrance to the Bay between the two peninsulas (San Francisco County on the south; Marin County on the north) In other words the Golden Gate as the entrance to the Bay was first discovered from the opposite Alameda County/Contra Costa County shore.

That Portola made no effort to reach the Golden Gate from the San Francisco side makes sense when we consider the fact that San Bruno Mountain lay perpendicular between him on top of the ridge and the Golden Gate to the north. In other words Portola looking north from the top of the ridge near present day San Bruno could not see the top of the San Francisco peninsula because of a huge mountain stretching perpendicular

from the ocean to the bay and lying between him and the entrance to the Bay. Apparently, thinking that any effort to go north in search of an entrance to the Bay on the western side was blocked by the huge intervening mountain, Portola sent Sergeant Ortega south down around the southern end of the Bay and then up the eastern side. Ortega and his party rode down around the southern end of the Bay and up the eastern side to present day Hayward where for the first time the Sacred Expedition encountered hostile Indians. In the face of such deadly opposition Ortega retreated and met up with Portola and the rest of the party on the western side of the Bay.

Rather than engaging hostile Indians on the eastern side of San Francisco Bay, the entire party including Portola retreated to what is now Monterey Bay although Portola did not recognize it as such. After taking a vote of all the officers, the entire party returned to San Diego by the way they had come and arrived back in San Diego on January 24, 1770. Portola told Father Junipero Serra who had stayed in San Diego to found the first mission that he (Portola) could not find Monterey Bay. Serra was extremely unhappy. Next Time: The Sacred Expedition returns north.

(Sources: Rawls and Bean: California, An Interpretive History, 9<sup>th</sup> ed., pp. 36-39; Carner-Ribalta: Gaspar De Portola, Explorer of California, pp.153-155;185-191;Douglas Kyle.Ed.: Historic Spots in California, 4<sup>th</sup> ed., pp.4-5;174;214;334;368-369)